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NSC BRIEFING

12 November 1953

SIGNIFICANCE OF PHILIPPINE ELECTIONS

- I. Careful preparation by civic groups for free Philippine elections paid off handsomely in Magsaysay's impressive victory.
 - A. Every intimation of dubious intent on part of Quirino men had been heavily publicized.
 - B. They apparently decided odds against them too great to buck.
- II. Fact that public demand for free elections recognized and respected will significantly strengthen Philippine democracy.
 - A. In past it has been more aspiration than reality.
- III. Not to be assumed, however, that Philippines has once and for all achieved stability.

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- A. Magsaysay has recognized integrity but meager political experience.
- B. Pretty well surrounded by same type old line politicians, Laurel, Ecleo etc., responsible for bad government in past.

IV. Pro-American tag pinned on Magsaysay by Liberals proved to be political asset in Philippines.

- A. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia fact that "American" candidate won may be regarded as indication that Filipinos still American puppets.

V. Inevitably some disillusion among Filipinos in months to come, land reform economic problems unresolvable on short term.

- A. Magsaysay has raised hopes that cannot possibly be satisfied.

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- B. Some powerful members of his party will oppose attempts to satisfy them.
- B. But prospect for good government in Philippines is brighter than ever before.

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